



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## **NOAA Fisheries Seeks Public Comment on a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Recreational Red Snapper Fishing in the Gulf of Mexico**

*Comment Period Ends October 20, 2014*

NOAA Fisheries is seeking public comment on a draft environmental impact statement for Amendment 40 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico. The Environmental Protection Agency announced the availability of the draft environmental impact statement on September 5, 2014 (79 FR 53061).

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) is considering actions to establish two components within the red snapper recreational sector. One would be a federal for-hire component comprised of federally-permitted headboats and charter vessels. The other would be a private-angling component comprised of anglers fishing from private vessels and state-permitted for-hire vessels. The draft environmental impact statement analyzes the impacts of this proposed action on the human environment.

The purpose of the draft environmental impact statement, developed by NOAA Fisheries in cooperation with the Council, is to analyze the effects of creating distinct private-angling and federal for-hire components of the recreational red snapper sector and allocate red snapper resources between these recreational components. Establishing separate components would provide a basis for flexible management approaches tailored to each component and reduce the likelihood for recreational quota overruns which could jeopardize the rebuilding of the red snapper stock. The draft environmental impact statement also evaluates how to allocate the recreational red snapper quota between the two components and how season closures provisions would be applied to the two components.

### **Request for Comments**

NOAA Fisheries must receive comments on this draft environmental impact statement no later than **October 20, 2014**. You may obtain electronic copies of the draft amendment and environmental impact statement from the NOAA Fisheries Web site at [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/gulf\\_fisheries/reef\\_fish/2013/am40/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/reef_fish/2013/am40/index.html) or the e-Rule Making Portal (see below).

### **Addresses**

You may submit comments on this document by one of the following methods:

- Electronic Submission via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal [www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2014-0107](http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2014-0107). Click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments. NOAA Fisheries will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous). You can also attach additional files (up to 10MB) in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.
- Mail written comments to Peter Hood, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on the regulations.gov website without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible.